

the *Nature* of things

AT THE GEORGIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



Museum's Second Exhibit Opening

From *the* Director

I'm pleased to report a lot of progress around the Museum. Visitation is up! We are now on our second exhibit in the newly refurbished Gallery, have a



new hire in the arthropod collection and all of the insects from the Annex have been moved to the Natural History Building. Although we've had a mostly dry winter—a few good rains have demonstrated the effectiveness of our new storm-drain system, and the building has a new clean face too!

The new gallery exhibit featuring predators and some of their prey was installed in January, and will run through at least early summer—school groups have been booking tours in May and June and were eager to be sure it would not change before then!

The front of the Natural History building once displayed a series of colorful murals executed by students of Gene Wright and Art Rosenbaum in the School of Art. These panels, meant to be temporary, were ravaged by the weather and were removed during the fall, leaving lots of small nails and holes in the surface. Just finished in January, the entire façade has been re-worked with a new uniform surface that looks great and is tempting as a new canvas!

Come on by and see us sometime!

- Bud Freeman

Bud Freeman



A composite GigaPan image

Following the successful exhibit of *Lost Species, Visions of Landscapes Past*, the GMNH opened its second exhibit in the new gallery--*Leopards, Hyenas and Bears- Oh My!* in late January, with a special opening for the Friends on the 26th and a grand opening to the public on the Saturday the 28th.

The core of the exhibit is drawn from a generous donation to the Museum made by Mr. Mike Collins, of Savannah, Georgia. Mr. Collins collected these specimens during expeditions to Africa, New Zealand and North America. The Museum Director and Ms. Megan Hagler made a trip to Savannah during the summer driving the largest Ryder truck available in Athens along with a 15 passenger van. The collection, which consists of 46 objects including skins, skulls mounts and dioramas, just fit and is permanently housed in the Museum's curation facility on the Atlanta Highway.

Museum interns were inspired by this collection and used it to develop a theme and storyboard for a management class in the UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. The response to this exhibit has been great so far with Saturday attendance exceeding 200 and weekly attendance exceeding 120, including students from courses in several schools and student field trips from local colleges. So far, we have almost 200 students booked for the coming months.

This exhibit also includes a bit of modern technology, the QR code, which is a complicated type of Bar-Code that can encode data about an object, including a link to a website with additional information. One simply "scans" the code with a smart phone QR app, which then accesses the associated web site. The QR codes either direct visitors to the Museum's Wildlife Web for those species that occur in Georgia or to the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology Wildlife Web for others.



The composite GigaPan image above possesses the exciting feature of panning and zooming. One can view our current exhibit and even read most of the signage using a web interface. This is not a substitute for actually visiting the exhibit, but it can be useful for those who cannot stop by or for those

Exhibit, continued on page 6

Friends Trip to Highlands, North Carolina



Surrounded by the world's largest stand of the rare Hartwig's Locust, we enjoy the view overlooking the Cashiers Valley.

A small, but enthusiastic, group of Friends made our way to the Highlands Plateau for a wonderful weekend of cooler mountain weather and fantastic views.

Robert Wyatt

Due to several threats on my life, I have promised to keep this field trip narrative relatively short compared to Steve Hilliard's magnum opus, which appeared in the fall issue of the newsletter and stretched to three pages including numerous full-color photos.

Nine of us traveled the 90 miles up to Highlands, which advertises itself as the "highest year-round town east of the Rockies." We stayed at The Mountain, a Unitarian Universalist retreat located on Little Scaly Mountain more than 4,000 feet above sea level. This rocky peak is covered in an old-growth forest that few recognize as such due to the stunted nature of the white oaks, but some of these have been aged at more than 300 years.

Following a traditional Unitarian "community social hour," with fresh popcorn and beer and wine, we were treated to a dinner that included lots of locally raised fresh produce, such

as tomatoes (yellow, as well as red!), leaf lettuce, and squash soup. We also had fresh mountain trout on Saturday night, when the Executive Director invited us to dine with some of The Mountain's major donors. But Steve's favorites were the desserts, featuring homemade blueberry bread pudding (with "Sauce Auglaize") and orange cream brownies.

Friday night we went on a short orientation hike led by Harriet, a staff member with a fixation on pioneer survival foods. No one took her up on frequent invitations to try "rock tripe," a tough, leathery, foliose lichen that appears to have zero food value and even less taste.

Saturday morning the group woke to winds and fog and temperatures in the 50s, a shock after enduring the August heat in Athens. But the mists dissipated as we hiked up Satulah Mountain, the

highest peak within the town limits of Highlands.

At the turn of the century, this peak was slated to have a hotel built on top, but a group of concerned citizens managed to raise enough money to buy the property and put an end to the threat. Over time this "Highlands



Gisela's plate of fresh, locally grown produce, including fresh trout.



Stopping to identify plants enroute, we head up to the peak of Whiteside Mountain.

Improvement Society” morphed into the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, the first in North Carolina.

From the top we enjoyed 360-degree views of three states and saw many rare plants endemic to the Blue Ridge, such as Granite Dome Goldenrod and Hartwig’s Locust. We also encountered a number of plants that represent relicts of the Pleistocene, such as Mountain Juniper, the next nearest populations of which occur in New England.

The rest of the morning was occupied with a visit to the Highlands Biological Station, including its Nature Center and Botanical Garden. On the Coker Rhododendron Trail we marveled at old-growth hemlock-hardwood forest right in the middle of town and noted the tremendous size of ancient mountain laurels, tuliptrees, and red maples.

After lunch we traveled to Whiteside Mountain, just east of Highlands on the road to Cashiers. The unusually clear weather made for especially stunning views from the top at 4,930 feet. Again, we noted many rare and endangered species of plants. Apparently, the peregrine falcons were not nesting, as the steep cliff faces were swarming with rock climbers.

Returning to The Mountain for drinks before dinner, we were pleasantly surprised to be joined by Kay Giese and David Sweat, who were up for the donors’ meeting. That evening was windy and cool, but we all braved the elements and sat on the deck of the lodge to see the stars. It has been many years since I have had such a clear view of the Milky

Way from a site with minimal light pollution.

Steve had an “app” on his iPad that allowed him to identify the constellations, and we had fun arguing about these. We also argued about the towns we were able to see light up in the lowlands below us. Turns out, we really were able to see to Walhalla, Clemson, and beyond!

Sunday morning the group decided to take one last hike up nearby Scaly Mountain, which lies on the Bartram Trail, but we took a little-known short cut via Turtle Pond Road. Enroute we encountered the fourth snake of the trip, a garter snake, which Dale Hoyt captured despite suffering a very foul emptying of its bowels. Other snakes that we saw included a scarlet king snake, a gray rat snake, and a more cooperative garter snake.

After lunch we all departed for home, but not without a final climb up the viewing tower to look away to Rabun Bald, the second-highest peak in Georgia. Participants on the trip besides those already mentioned were Amy Edwards, Ann Stoneburner, Dave Coleman, Emily Carr, and Gisela and Tom Gresham.



Dale Hoyt holds a garter snake caught atop Scaly Mountain.



Join the Friends of the Georgia Museum of Natural History on Our Upcoming Field Trip to Sapelo Island

Friends of GMNH invite you to come along on our trip to Sapelo Island and a stay at the Reynolds Mansion - May 11-13, 2012.

The cost is \$550 per person including tax. This includes all meals (featuring a seafood feast and special southern breakfast), ferry fee and transportation on the island. Of this amount, \$100 is a tax-deductible donation to the museum.

Make your reservations soon as space is limited.

You must be a member in good standing of the Friends of GMNH (up-to-date on your dues).

A \$275 deposit per person must be received by **March 20**.

Final payment is due **April 15**.

Please make checks payable to Friends of GMNH and mail to:

Friends of GMNH
Attn.: Liz McGhee
Georgia Museum of Natural History
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-7882

For complete information, go to:

<http://museum.nhm.uga.edu/content/events/addinfo/Sapelo2012.pdf>



Upcoming Events From *the* President

Georgia Museum of Natural History "Friendraiser"

April 5, 5:00-6:30 pm
The Globe Bar
Downtown Athens
Free event!

This event is open to anyone interested in becoming a member of the Friends.

Live music!

Friends of the Georgia Museum of Natural History 2012 Annual Meeting

May 19, 4-6:00 p.m.
Drinks, hors d'oeuvres and music
Georgia Museum of Natural
History Buliding

Please join us for some fun and fellowship (free admission).

We will elect new members of the Board of Directors. Nominees from the floor are eligible along with those presented by the Nominating Committee, which consists of Dave Coleman, Betty Jean Craige and Kay Giese. You will also have the opportunity to meet our new officers and share financial news and plans for the future.

Please RSVP to emcgree@uga.edu or 706-542-3940 if you plan to attend.

I am sure that others will report in greater detail elsewhere in this newsletter on the success of this year's edition of our major annual fundraiser, Celebration. But I want to note here the great generosity of our membership and thank all of you who helped by donating items for the auction or bidding on items in the auction or lending a hand to put it on.

It was a great, but pleasant, surprise to me that the live auction was as successful as it was, given that it was our first attempt. When the dust finally settled and everyone paid up, the silent auction brought in \$2,359, which is in the range we expected. But the live auction netted \$6,955! This exceeded all expectations, and, of course is a great boon for the Museum, which receives those funds directly into a University of Georgia Foundation account.

Kudos to all involved! And, having one live auction under our belt, maybe we can do even better with Celebration 2012. That event is scheduled for 20 October 2012, so go ahead: mark your calendar and plan to join us again. Not only is it a good meal (catered by Trumps) in a nice atmosphere (the Botanical Garden Conservatory), but it also is a gathering of good friends all dedicated to supporting the Georgia Museum of Natural History.

I will soon be appointing the Nominating Committee for the Friends and charging them with finding members who are willing to run for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition, they will be charged with recruiting new members to serve on the Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving, please get in touch with me or any other member of the Board. Like vampires, we always need new blood!

And, of course, board members come and board members go, but I wanted to note one going: Steve Hilliard has



resigned as Past President, citing work demands as well as added personal responsibilities. He was the second President of the Friends and served for five years in that capacity. Most recently, Steve served as chair of the Field Trip Committee and on the Web Committee. He has assured me that he and his wife, Amy Edwards (currently Friends Secretary), will continue to be involved in activities of the Friends. Thanks, Steve!

Finally, let me again draw your attention to what I consider one of the best benefits of membership in the Friends: the opportunity to go on field trips to beautiful natural areas in the company of a diverse group of biologists with expertise in birds, plants, fish, mammals, insects, etc. This newsletter contains a report on our trip to the North Carolina Mountains of the Highlands Plateau. Our next adventure will be to Sapelo Island, one of the Georgia Sea Islands, on May 11-13. Please join us!

-- Robert Wyatt





Exhibit, continued from page one contemplating a visit. You can access it via this link - <http://gigapan.org/gigapans/99920>.

Please check it out and let us know what you think of this technology, especially those of you who have not been able to come by and visit.

Friends Website Coming Soon

This winter we have been working on a web site for the Friends. One of the new web site's features is the ability to pay your annual Friends membership online. The web site will also feature information about the Friends, and upcoming activities and events.

Access the site by going to: <https://sites.google.com/site/friendsgmnh>

Friends Annual Celebration A Huge Success

Liz McGhee

The Friends of the Georgia Museum of Natural History's Celebration, our annual fund-raising gala, was held October 15, 2011 at the conservatory of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia.

The evening began with hors d'oeuvres, music by Curley Maple and a silent auction.

Donations included books, jewelry, paintings, Bulldawg memorabilia, a guided tour of the Scull Shoals mound site and much more. We lay claim to the most eclectic auction items in town! A bountiful dinner catered by Trumps followed.

In past years, a speaker would offer an after-dinner presentation. This year, the Friends Celebration committee decided to have a live auction instead. Sam Williamson, auctioneer extraordinaire, was our guide for this new event. The auction was an incredible success. Bidding was fast and furious with much laughter and encouragement. This year was by far our most successful fund-raiser to date.

Our thanks to Dr. Wilf Nicholls and the staff of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Sam Williamson, all who donated to the auctions, the bidders and the 100 attendees at Celebration.

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Collection of Arthropods Welcomes New Associate Curator, Rick Hoebeke

Joe McHugh

In September we welcomed E. Richard Hoebeke to the GMNH team. Rick transferred to the UGA Collection of Arthropods after working for 35 years in the Department of Entomology at Cornell University where he served as a Senior Extension Associate and the Assistant Curator of the Cornell University Insect Collection. Rick filled the Collections Manager/Associate Curator position that was vacated by the recent retirement of Dr. Cecil L. Smith.

Rick is a native of Michigan. He earned two degrees from Michigan State University: B.Sc. in Biological Science (1971) and M.Sc. in Systematic Entomology (1973). Rick also undertook graduate studies in Systematic Entomology at Cornell University from 1974-1977 before assuming a position in the collection there.

Rick's research program is multifaceted. One focus of his work is the taxonomy of beetles, especially rove beetles (Staphylinidae) and longhorned beetles (Cerambycidae). Rick is best known, however, for his contributions in the area of invasive species detection and monitoring. Rick was the first to discover and report numerous exotic insect species that were inadvertently introduced into the

United States, North America, and the Western Hemisphere. He was the first to identify the destructive Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) found in New York City in 1996, the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) found in eastern Pennsylvania in 2001, and the pine-killing European woodwasp (*Sirex noctilio*) found in central New York in 2005. Since 2001, Rick has been an identification specialist supporting the joint USDA-APHIS and Forest Service's "Early Detection and Rapid Response" survey for exotic bark beetles (Scolytinae).

Rick has been an author on more than 70 refereed papers about exotic species, providing valuable information about their recognition, distribution, and biology. He coauthored a book on the taxonomy of the Asian longhorned beetles (genus *Anoplophora*). Currently, he is completing a book on the invasive weevil species occurring in North America.

Rick wasted no time after arriving in Athens. He quickly became a valuable member of the GMNH staff and has been instrumental in the reorganization project that is underway in the UGA



Collection of Arthropods. Already he is conducting local field work and providing identification services to support entomological research in the region. After decades of living in Ithaca, N.Y., Rick is delighted to be able to collect insects and pursue his other outdoor interests year-round. We are delighted to welcome his taxonomic expertise, cheery personality, and high energy level to the Museum.



Join the Friends and support the Museum

Membership includes: a subscription to *The Nature of Things* newsletter, invitations to museum events, Friends programs, and field trips, and a 10% discount on GMNH merchandise. Membership and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

\$5,000 Life ___	Name: _____
\$2,500 Benefactor ___	Address: _____
\$1,500 Sustaining ___	City/State/Zip (9-digit): _____
\$500 Patron ___	Email: _____
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Please make your check payable to *Friends of the GMNH* and mail to:

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